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Week of September 6, 1982

SECRETARY DONOVAN ANNOUNCES REPORT
ON REDUCING ERISA PAPERWORK

WASHINGTON -- Secretary of Labor Raymond J. Donovan announced the release of a task force report which recommends ways to reduce the paperwork requirements under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA).

As part of the Administration's deregulation program, Donovan committed the department to reduce paperwork burdens imposed by EPISA. As a result, an ERISA Paperwork Reduction Task Force was established within the Office of Pension and Welfare Benefit Programs (PWBP) to conduct a detailed review of the reporting and disclosure requirements in title I of ERISA, and to propose changes that would reduce and simplify those requirements.

The ERISA Paperwork Task Force Report identifies a number of requirements that could be trimmed without sacrificing needed participant protections, and recommends changes that could result in considerable cost savings for employee benefit plans. "The Task Force recommendations," says Donovan, "will give us a framework for our efforts to reduce unnecessary reporting and disclosure burdens and costs under ERISA."

The Task Force's recommendations include:

* Easing the current five-year requirment for preparing and distributing an updated Summary Plan Description (SPD).

* Deferring the date for distributing an updated SPD from Nov. 1982 to Nov. 1983.

* Permitting the Summary Annual Report to be posted at worksite locations instead of being distributed individually to current employees.

* Deferring the issuance of individual benefit reporting and recordkeeping regulations to permit further evaluation of participant needs and costs to plans.

* Limiting, to the extent possible, the filing of SPDs with the Labor Department.

* Undertaking a coordinated and comprehensive revision of the annual report requirements, following completion of assessments currently underway at the Labor Department and the Internal Revenue Service of the information needed for enforcement.

The Task Force's recommendations are being reviewed within the department and by the Advisory Council on Welfare and Pension Benefit Plans.

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Week of September 6, 1982

SERIES OF JOB FAIR PROGRAMS
INITIATED BY WOMEN'S BUREAU

WASHINGTON -- The first of a series of Job Fair/Employment Exchange programs sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor's Women's Bureau wi-l be held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on Sept. 6, 1982. The 1-day Job Fair at the Caribe Hilton in San Juan will bring more than 1,000 women together to learn about the job seeking process and to meet with representatives of more than 50 participating local businesses.

The event is being co-sponsored by the Puerto Rico Governor's Commission on Women's Rights, the Governor's office of Equal Opportunity, the Puerto Rico Department of Labor, and a number of other agencies which are providing various kinds of support and assistance.

The Job Fair will include morning seminars on resume writing, interviewing techniques, self-awareness, and assertiveness training. The afternoon program will provide for one-on-one counseling for women participants as well as opportunities to meet the employers to learn about their businesses, the kinds of jobs they fill, and the qualifications necessary for employment. The Commission on Women's Rights will maintain an ongoing employment exchange to match women applicants with jobs.

This model, which was developed by the Women's Bureau in Westchester County, N.Y., will be replicated, with some variations, in all of the Women's Bureau regions. "Our objective is to help women identify their employment skills, and improve their jobfinding techniques," said Women's Bureau Director, Dr. Lenora Cole-Alexander. "And we want to put in place an employment exchange system that will help women find jobs. We feel that this is an ideal model for working together with the private sector to increase employment opportunities for women."

Other Job Fairs are being planned for Boston, Massachusetts; Fort Wayne, Indiana; New Orleans, Louisiana; Grand Junction, Colorado; Billings, Montana; Evanston, Wyoming; Anchorage, Alaska; and several other cities.

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Week of September 6, 1982

TELEDYNE AWARDED $7.7 MILLION
TO OPERATE PHOENIX JOB CORPS CENTER

WASHINGTON -- Secretary of Labor Raymond J. Donovan announced the award of a $7.7 million contract renewal for the operation of the Job Corps Center in Phoenix, Ariz.

The two-year contract, which totals $7,760,085, was awarded to Teledyne Economic Development Corp., of Los Angeles on a competitive basis and runs from Sept. 28, 1982 to Sept. 27, 1984.

The Phoenix center provides training for economically disadvantaged youth, 16 through 21 years of age, in a residential setting. The center is coed with a 415-bed capacity, serving approximately one thousand participants a year.

Job training at the center includes automotive occupations, bricklaying, business and clerical skills, carpentry, cement masonry, electronics assembly, health occupations, painting, plastering, meat-cutting, and welding.

The center also provides trainees with basic education, social skills, counseling, medical and dental care, and other support services. They can stay in the Job Corps for as long as two years.

Teledyne operates eight other Job Corps centers--in Albuquerque and Roswell, N.M., Gainesville and Jacksonville, Fla., Pittsburgh, Pa., Guthrie, Okla., Tucson, Ariz., and Grafton, Mass.

There are currently 107 Job Corps centers in 43 states and Puerto Rico, with a national enrollment of about 38,000.

The network of Job Corps centers is administered by the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration.

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Week of September 6, 1982

PRODUCTIVITY AND COSTS:
NONFINANCIAL CORPORATE SECTOR, 2ND QUARTER 1982

WASHINGTON -- Productivity in nonfinancial corporations increased at a 2.3 percent annual rate in the second quarter of 1982, according to preliminary measures reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. This was tne largest gain since the 4.7 percent increase in the first quarter of 1981. The second quarter 1982 increase reflected a 1.0 percent decline in output and a 3.2 percent reduction in employee-hours. During the first quarter, productivity had increased 0.5 percent in this sector, as output and hours fell more steeply than in the second quarter. This sector includes all corporations doing business in the United States with the exception of banks, stock and commodity brokers, and finance and insurance companies.

Revised second-quarter measures also were reported for the business, nonfarm business, and manufacturing sectors. The revisions show that productivity increased 1.2 percent rather than 2.9 percent in the business sector, 0.5 percent rather than 2.3 percent among nonfarm businesses, and 0.2 percent rather than 0.9 percent in manufacturing (seasonally adjusted annual rates). The preliminary measures, published July 29, were based on data then available. The current measures of business and nonfarm business productivity primarily reflect downward revisions in the growth of output and slightly smaller declines than reported earlier in labor input data.

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Week of September 6, 1982

REAL EARNINGS IN JULY 1982

WASHINGTON -- Real average weekly earnings increased 0.2 percent from June to July, after seasonal adjustment, according to preliminary data released by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. A 0.5 percent increase in average hourly earnings and a 0.3 percent increase in average weekly hours was partially offset by a 0.6 percent increase in consumer prices.

The data pertain to gross earnings of full-time and part-time workers on production or nonsupervisory jobs in the private nonfarm sector of the economy. Real earnings--or earnings in constant dollars--are calculated by adjusting earnings in current dollars for changes in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W).

Since July 1981, average weekly earnings increased 4.7 percent as a 5.9 percent increase in average hourly earnings was partially offset by a 1.1 percent decrease in average weekly hours. Real average weekly earnings, however, decreased by 1.4 percent due to a 6.3 percent increase in the CPI-W. Before adjustment for seasonal change and deflation by the CPI-W, gross average weekly earnings were $269.98 in July, compared with $257.74 a year earlier.

The Hourly Earnings Index in dollars of constant purchasing power decreased 0.2 percent from June to July. Compared with a year ago, the index was up 0.6 percent. The index excludes the effects of overtime in manufacturing and some of the effects of interindustry shifts, such as the shift of workers between high-wage and low-wage industries.

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Week of September 6, 1982

CONSUMER PRICES: ENERGY AND FOOD - JULY 1982

WASHINGTON -- The July price for all types of gasoline rose 2.2 cents to $1.318, the U.S. Department of Labor announced. The July prices of leaded regular gasoline averaged $1.263; unleaded regular, $1.331; and leaded premium, $1.450. In the 28 cities for which gasoline prices are published, prices for all types of gasoline averaged highest in Honolulu and lowest in Northeast Pennsylvania and Dallas. These average prices are collected by BLS in conjunction with the Consumer Price Index.

The U.S. price per gallon of fuel oil increased to $1.200 in July. In the 16 cities for which fuel oil prices are published, the price per gallon averaged highest in Buffalo and lowest in Portland and Milwaukee.

Electricity and Natural Gas

The U.S. average price for 500 kWh was $38.403, up 35.6 cents from June. The price for 40 therms was $23.223, 13.5 cents lower than June. The price for 100 therms was $54.586, 21.4 cents lower than June.

Food

The U.S. average price increased for 45 items and decreased for 34 items in July.

Decreases outnumbered increases by a five to four margin in average prices for cereal and bakery products. Most changes were small. The largest decrease was for hamburger rolls, down 2.3 cents; the largest increase was for salted soda crackers, up 3.5 cents.

Average prices for twenty-two meats, poultry, fish and eggs items were higher, while only six were lower. Price levels for all pork, other meats, poultry and egg items were higher. The largest increase was recorded for center cut pork chops, up 7.6 cents, while the largest decrease was for round steak, down 11.9 cents.

Price levels for all six dairy products were higher. The most noteworthy increases were for yogurt, up 3.3 cents, and ice cream, up 3.2 cents.

Sixteen decreases and eight increases were noted in average prices for fruits and vegetables items in July. Several sizeable drops were recorded, including: 71.1 cents for cherries, 25.3 cents for sweet peppers, 22.8 cents for green snap beans, and 14.7 cents for cabbage. Increases in price levels were much smaller with a 4.2 cents increase for valencia oranges being the largest.

Five increases and seven decreases in average prices for other foods at home were recorded for the month ending in July. The most significant changes occurred in price levels for coffee items. The largest increase was a 2.7 cents increase for instant coffee in 9.1 - 14 oz. sizes. The largest decrease was for freeze dried coffee which dropped 16.8 cents.

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Week of September 6, 1982

THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX--JULY 1982

WASHINGTON -- The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) and the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) both increased 0.6 percent before seasonal adjustment in July, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported.

The CPI-U rose to a level of 292.2 and the CPI-W to 291.8 (1967=100). The all items experimental measure using a rental equivalence approach (CPI-U, X-1) increased 0.7 percent to 265.0. Compared with their levels in July 1981, the CPI-U was 6.5 percent higher, the CPI-U, X-1 was 6.4 percent higher, and the CPI-W was 6.3 percent higher.

CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U)--Seasonally Adjusted Changes

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the CPI for All Urban Consumers rose 0.6 percent while the experimental CPI-U, X-1 increased 0.8 percent.

The July advance of 0.6 percent in the official CPI-U compares with increases of 1.0 percent in each of the preceding two months and substantially smaller changes earlier this year. Most of the slowdown in July was attributable to the deceleration in the housing, transportation, and food and beverage components. In particular, a slowing in the rise of homeownership costs, a smaller increase in gasoline prices, and a decline in prices for fruits and vegetables, were responsible for the moderation. On the other hand, the index for apparel and upkeep increased more than in recent months. Other major categories of consumer spending--medical care, entertainment, and other goods and services--rose about the same as in June.

The housing component rose 0.5 percent in July, substantially less than in recent months. Homeownership costs, which had been primarily responsible for the large increases, rose 0.4 percent. House prices advanced 0.7 percent, while mortgage interest rates declined for the third consecutive month. Smaller increases in the prices for fuels and other utilities also contributed to the deceleration in the housing component. Fuel oil prices advanced 0.6 percent, following a 2.1 percent increase in June. Charges for natural gas rose 0.9 percent, while the index for electricity was unchanged. On the other hand, the index for rent advanced 1.0 percent in July, noticeably more than in most recent months. The index for household furnishings and operations rose 0.4 percent.

Increases in the prices for gasoline and used cars accounted for over two-thirds of the 1.2 percent rise in the transportation component. Gasoline prices registered a 2.0 percent advance in July, following a 5.4 percent increase in June. Despite a 8.4 percent rise in the past 3 months, gasoline prices were still 7.7 percent below the peak level of March 1981. New and used car prices rose 0.5 and 1.6 percent, respectively. Automobile finance charges -- up 0.8 percent -- increased for the second consecutive month, following declines earlier this year. The index for public transportation rose 0.5 percent.

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The food and beverage component was unchanged in July as a decrease in grocery store food prices was offset by moderate increases in the indexes for restaurant meals and alcoholic beverages. The 0.4 percent decline in grocery store food prices follows increases of 1.0 percent in May and 0.8 percent in June. A sharp decline in prices for fresh fruits and vegetables was largely responsible for the drop. The index for meats, poultry, fish, and eggs was unchanged in July, following substantial increases in each of the preceding 3 months. Beef and poultry prices both declined, while pork prices rose less than in recent months. Egg prices, however, rose sharply, after registering declines in each of the preceding 4 months. The index for dairy products which had risen only 1.0 percent during the entire previous 12 month period, rose 0.5 percent in July. As was true last month, most other major grocery store food groups recorded small declines or very moderate increases.

The medical care index rose 1.0 percent in July, about the same as in recent months. The index for medical care commodities, which includes prescription and nonprescription drugs and medical supplies, increased 0.6 percent. Charges for hospital rooms and physicians' services rose 1.7 and 0.7 percent, respectively.

The index for apparel and upkeep rose 0.5 percent in July. This compares with an increase of 1.0 percent during the first 6 months of 1982. Seasonal price reductions were prevalent, but most clothing items registered small increases, following seasonal adjustment. Charges for apparel services rose 1.0 percent in July.

The indexes for entertainment and other goods and services rose 0.6 and 0.7 percent, respectively.

CPI-U Experimental Measure

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the CPI-U using rent substitution (X-1) rose 0.8 percent in July. The official CPI-U rose 0.6 percent. The difference in July reflects the different treatment of homeownership costs in the two indexes. The CPI-U, X-1 uses rental charges to represent movements in shelter costs of homeowners. Rental charges increased 1.0 percent in July. The official CPI-U employs house prices, mortgage interest rates, property taxes, property insurance, and maintenance and repair costs. This measure of homeownership costs increased 0.4 percent in July.

CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W)--Seasonally Adjusted Changes

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers advanced 0.6 percent in July, following a 1.0 percent increase in June. The food and beverage component was unchanged as a decline in grocery store food prices was offset by moderate increases in the indexes for restaurant meals and alcoholic beverages. The 0.3 percent decline in the index for grocery store foods was largely attributable to a decrease in prices for fresh fruits and vegetables and a deceleration in meat prices. The housing component increased 0.6 percent in July, following a 1.0 percent rise in June. Homeownership costs increased, but by much less than in recent months. House prices rose 0.8 percent and mortgage interest rates declined for the third consecutive month. The index for fuel and other utilities also slowed considerably. The transportation component registered a 1.2 percent increase in July, as gasoline prices rose 1.9 percent. New and used car prices rose 0.6 and 1.6 percent, respectively. The index for medical care advanced 1.0 percent. The apparel and upkeep component rose 0.4 percent in July, following seasonal adjustment. The indexes for entertainment and other goods and services rose 0.8 and 0.7 percent, respectively.

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Week of September 6, 1982

JOB BANKS VALUABLE
TOOL FOR WORKERS

(Another in a series on laws and programs administered by the U.S. Labor Department protecting workers.)

WASHINGTON -- Jobless or job-changing Americans have an invaluable tool in the form of the Nation's Job Banks, operating in nearly 200 locations across the country.

The Job Banks--computerized listings of jobs filed by employers with local State employment service offices--provide up-to-the-minute information on available job openings not only in the locality but anywhere in the State hookup.

Job Banks, launched more than a dozen years ago to ease the problem of locating a job at the state-operated agencies, have proved to be unchallenged in speeding up the job search process. Jobs listed by employers in each Job Service office are fed into the Job Bank computer with all the essential information necessary to acquaint the job seeker with the facts needed to find the right job in the right place for the right compensation.

The effect of the Job Banks on the Job Service system across the country has been phenomenal in terms of speedy service and equal access for all job seekers. The Job Bank system provides the information through two systems: The on-screen, rolling view of jobs listed in the bank, or on print-outs in loosely bound volumes the job seeker can flip through with the aid of codes.

The latest Job Bank listings, covering about 160 of the banks, are circulated around the country through the 1,700 local Job Service offices, enabling job seekers first hand information as to the latest job opportunities. The listings represent an average of 1,215 job openings at each of the Job Bank surveyed.

As an example, there were about 47,800 jobs listed in the clerical and sales fields; another 38,000 openings for service workers of all kinds; 686 electrical engineers, 1,801 motor vehicle mechanics, 1,254 construction and maintenance painters; 2,134 sewing machine operators; and 1,901 chefs and cooks.

There are more than 4 million openings listed with Job Service offices annually. Most of the openings from the employer are handled in routine fashion through the local employment service (Job Service) offices. These jobs that are listed in the Job Banks have been found to reach more job seekers and provide better service to both the jobless and the offerer of the jobs.

One of the interesting elements in the institution of the Job Banks was the removal of personal selectivity on the part of Job Service staff when a job seeker came looking for work. Once the Job Bank was established, it became a matter of total offerings without some "special" or "good" jobs being kept "under the table" for "preferred" clients. The Job Bank, in effect, helped the Nation achieve better equality of effort and service than ever before.

One of the major efforts that never quite got off the ground was the promise of a "job matching" system, i.e., a system whereby the Job Bank would be matched by a "person bank"--a bank of job seekers with their qualifications listed in a matching computer that would literally match the job seeker with the listed job requirements.

Many forward steps were taken in this job matching program but the promise was not met because of dwindling financial resources. Another obstacle, not envisioned at first, was the variety of hardware suddenly available for the system, compounded by several states insisting that the hardware produced in their state be used for the matching system even though it failed to match the standards for uniformity set by the Federal Government. The uniform standards were meant to provide the basis for future systems capable of providing coast-to-coast matching of jobs and people.

Employers find the Job Bank an exceptional tool in their constaht efforts to upgrade the skills and talent they employ. The specifics of the job, with the exact requirements clearly identified, leave no question or puzzlement as to what the employer is seeking. The resultant employee prospect has a good chance of landing the job once he finds it on the Job Bank lists and applies for it--if the Job Service staff agrees that the person is suitable.

As the Nation moves ahead toward economic recovery and the resulting increased activity in the job placement market, the network of Job Banks and its related services will constitute an even more critical and important element in the overall scheme of helping job seekers land the jobs that are right for them.

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Week of September 6, 1982

FILLERS FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration makes funds available to employer organizations, labor groups, educational institutions and nonprofit firms interested in upgrading their safety and health competency through training. The program is called "New Directions."

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Because of grants under the New Directions program, a training effort, some 80,000 employers and employees received safety and health training and assistance, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. New Directions is administered by the department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

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The 1981 annual report of the U.S. Department of Labor reports that the 1,200 compliance officers of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration were responsible for the protection of approximately 40 million employees in 3 million of the nation's workplaces.

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More than 232,528 persons were employed in the coal mining industry during fiscal 1981, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's annual report. These miners worked at 2,546 underground mines, 3,416 surface mines, and 1,200 other surface operations under jurisdiction of the department's Mine Safety and Health Administration.

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